



Supreme Judicial Court

John Adams High School Essay Contest

Spring 2007

Topic:

The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 is one of the most important documents in United States history. The concepts within it helped to establish some of the most basic principles of American democracy.

- Identify three (3) concepts of law that were established in the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780; and
- Explain how each of these three concepts of law helped to establish basic principles of American democracy.

**Supreme Judicial Court
John Adams High School Essay Contest
Spring 2007
Contest Rules and Regulations**

Eligibility The contest is open to all Massachusetts students currently enrolled in **grades 9-12**.

Rules

1. Each school may submit up to two essays.
2. Each essay must be the student's original work and have never been published before.
3. The essay should be **750 words** or less and must be typed.
4. No identifying information should appear on the essay. Each essay must be accompanied by a **cover sheet** including the student's name, address, home telephone number, school name, grade, teacher's name, and name and title of the school official submitting the essay.
5. Entries must be submitted in **triplicate**. Students should retain an electronic version of their essays if possible.
6. Essays will be judged for effectiveness, creativity, and originality. Style, content, grammar, spelling, and punctuation will all be considered.

Deadline Entries must be received in the Supreme Judicial Court no later than **April 9, 2007**. Late entries and entries submitted by individual students will not be eligible; no e-mail entries, please. **Mail entries to: Carol Lev, Coordinator of Program and Policy Development, Supreme Judicial Court John Adams High School Essay Contest, Supreme Judicial Court, John Adams Courthouse, One Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108.** Queries may be directed to carol.lev@sjc.state.ma.us.

Prizes The first prize winner will receive a \$500 savings bond; the second prize winner will receive a \$200 savings bond; the third prize winner will receive a \$100 savings bond; and there will be an honorable mention award. A Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court will visit the first-place winner's classroom to talk with students. All winners will receive award certificates signed by the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court and will have copies of their essays displayed in a public gallery in the John Adams Courthouse, Boston. Electronic copies of the winning essays and other outstanding essays may, with permission, be posted on the John Adams Courthouse Education Resource Center's website: www.mass.gov/courts/jaceducation. *This website also includes an electronic resource guide where students may find citations to useful online research resources.*

Notification The winners will be notified on **Law Day, May 1, 2007**.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

Massachusetts History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework: Learning Standards, Concepts, and Skills Alignment

ESSAY QUESTION:

The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 is one of the most important documents in United States history. The concepts within it helped to establish some of the most basic principles of American democracy.

- *Identify three (3) concepts of law that were established in the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780; and*
- *Explain how each of these three concepts of law helped to establish basic principles of American democracy.*

Suggested learning standards in the Massachusetts History & Social Science Curriculum Framework (upon which the History & Social Science Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System is based) related to this question:

High School U.S. History - Pg. 66

USI.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the "Great Compromise" that was reached.

Major Debates

- A. the distribution of political power
- B. the rights of individuals
- C. the rights of states
- D. slavery

Founders

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. Alexander Hamilton
- C. James Madison
- D. George Washington

High School U.S. History - Pg. 67

USI.11 Describe the purpose and functions of government.

USI.12 Explain and provide examples of different forms of government, including democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, and autocracy.

USI.13 Explain why the United States government is classified as a democratic government.

USI.14 Explain the characteristics of American democracy, including the concepts of popular sovereignty and constitutional government, which includes representative institutions, federalism, separation of powers, shared powers, checks and balances, and individual rights.

USI.15 Explain the varying roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in the United States.

USI.16 Describe the evolution of the role of the federal government, including public services, taxation, economic policy, foreign policy, and common defense.

USI.17 Explain the major components of Massachusetts' state government, including the roles and functions of the governor, state legislature, and other constitutional officers.

USI.18 Explain the major components of local government in Massachusetts, including the roles and functions of school committees, town meetings, boards of selectmen, mayors, and city councils.

USI.19 Explain the rights and the responsibilities of citizenship and describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.

USI.20 Explain the evolution and function of political parties, including their role in federal, state, and local elections

Concepts & Skills - Civics and Government

(concepts and skills in the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework are intended to be introduced at each grade level and re-introduced at each grade level thereafter; concepts and skills are assessed as part of the History & Social Science Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)

Concepts and Skills - Page 28 (Grade 5)

8. Define and use correctly words related to government: citizen, suffrage, rights, representation, federal, state, county, and municipal.

9. Give examples of the responsibilities and powers associated with major federal and state officials (the President, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor, state senators, and state representatives).

10. Explain the structure of the student's city or town government

Civics and Government - Page 34 (Grade 6)

8. Define what a nation is and give examples of the different ways nations are formed.

Civics and Government - Page 42 (Grade 7)

7. Define and use correctly words and terms relating to government such as city-state, dynasty, kingdom, empire, republic, separation of powers, civic duty, rule of law, and military.

Civics and Government - Page 65 (Grades 8-12)

12. Define and use correctly the following words and terms: Magna Carta, parliament, habeas corpus, monarchy, and absolutism.